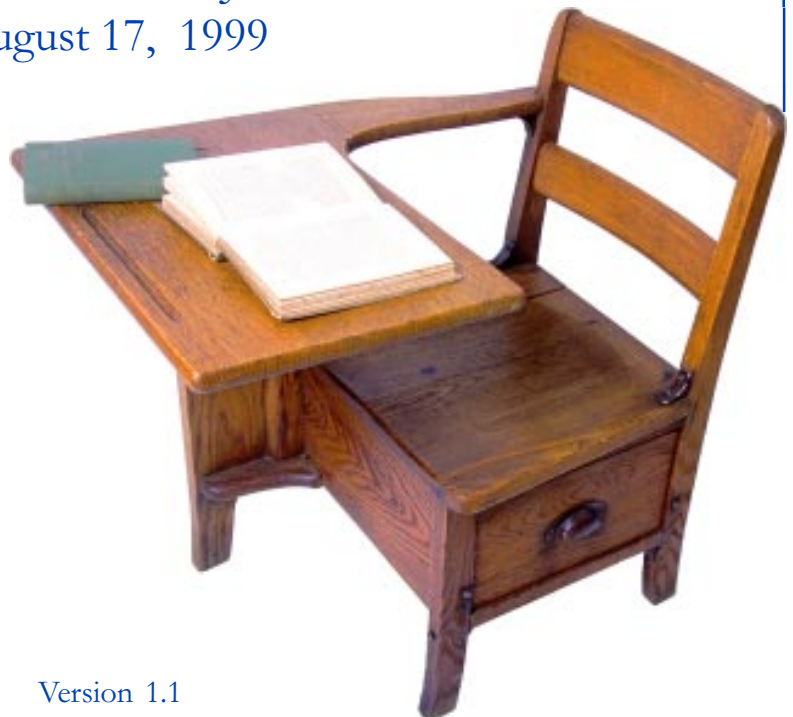


GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH VIOLENCE

"Prevention and Response"
Analysis and Recommendations Regarding
Violence in Massachusetts Schools



Submitted To Governor Paul Cellucci and
Lieutenant Governor Jane Swift
August 17, 1999



GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON YOUTH VIOLENCE
MEMBER LIST

Jane Perlov, Secretary, Executive Office of Public Safety, Chair

David Driscoll, Commissioner, Department of Education
*(John Bynoe, Administrator, Designee)

Frederick F. Foresteire, Superintendent of Schools, City of Everett

Robert Gittens, Commissioner, Department of Youth Services

The Honorable Patrick C. Guerriero, Mayor, City of Melrose

Howard Koh, Commissioner, Department of Public Health
*(Paul Jacobsen, Deputy Commissioner, Designee)

Jefferey Locke, Interim Commissioner, Department of Social Services

Ralph Martin, District Attorney, Suffolk County District Attorney's
Office

Edward Merrick, Chief, Plainville Police Department

William O'Leary, Secretary, Executive Office of Health & Human
Services

Michael J. Sentance, Governor's Advisor on Education

Michael Sullivan, District Attorney, Plymouth County District
Attorney's Office

Technical Advisors

Major Daniel Jamroz, Massachusetts State Police

Steven Coan, Massachusetts Fire Marshall

Bud Ianazzo, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
*(Designee Diane Brown-Couture, Nuclear Safety Director)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Executive Summary	4
II.	Introduction	7
	A. The Governor's Council On Youth Violence	7
	B. The Incidence of Youth Violence	8
	C. Perpetrators of Youth Violence	8
III.	Existing Youth Violence Initiatives in Massachusetts	10
IV.	Recommendations	31
	A. Inventory and Evaluation of Existing Violence Prevention Programs	33
	B. Education	34
	C. Prevention	39
	D. Critical Incident Response and Management	44
	E. Proposed Safe Schools Legislation	47
V.	Long-term Goals of the Council	48
VI.	Conclusion	49
VII.	Appendix	50

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 30, 1998, Governor Paul Cellucci signed Executive Order 406 (EO), creating the Governor's Council on Youth Violence (*Appendix A*). Under the EO, Governor Cellucci designated the Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety as Chairperson of the Council. The Council's mission is to review, recommend and report to the Governor, policies and programs necessary to ensure safe schools across the Commonwealth, including violence prevention initiatives and emergency response protocol.

Highly publicized acts of violence by students in schools have focused the nation's attention on the need to ensure that our children are safe while in school, as well as on the way to and from school. Violent students may be reacting to incidents that occur on school property or events in their homes or communities. We expect schools to educate, but we are also asking them to go beyond this and share responsibility for ensuring public safety.

A safe environment comes from the establishment of a framework that includes violence prevention, a comprehensive safety and crisis plan, and the combined efforts of schools, law enforcement, human service officials, as well as families, to respond to the needs of potentially violent children. Together, these groups need to assess factors contributing to both the problems and their solutions, develop action plans and strategies, and determine progress. Successful plans and strategies include a continuum of efforts from violence prevention to intervention and alternative services. Every school district should have a violence reduction program and an emergency response plan. Effective plans help reduce the risk factors that lead to violence and promote protective factors that reduce violence.

Although Massachusetts schools are generally safe, and there are numerous programs geared toward violence prevention (many of which are outlined in this proposal), it is still necessary to reexamine the state's role in ensuring a safe educational environment. The events of this past year, in particular the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, have provided the Commonwealth with an opportunity to reexamine the programs and services it already provides and to strengthen the resources used in the fight against youth violence. With this in mind, the Council recommends that the state conduct a comprehensive study of the existing youth violence programs and their current success rate in Massachusetts. It is essential to evaluate these programs and determine whether they should be expanded or refocused. Once this information is gathered, a directory should be assembled, thereby creating a statewide clearinghouse for violence prevention programs. This would be a valuable resource for school districts when implementing or expanding youth violence initiatives.

The Council's recommendations outlined in this proposal are the result of subcommittee discussions and are divided into five areas: [existing programs](#), [education](#), [prevention](#), [critical incident management](#), and [proposed safe schools legislation](#).

Education: Education must be directed at students, parents, and school personnel. Student education should include curricula development, life skills training, and the use of alternative classrooms and schools when needed. Educating for character should be incorporated into every facet of learning, starting at a very early grade level. Students should also be encouraged to become involved in violence prevention initiatives in their communities. Parents and educators should be trained to recognize the early warning signs of troubled youth. Although parents bear the responsibility for their children, schools should be adequately prepared to make the necessary referrals once a child is identified as “at risk” for violent behavior.

Prevention: To prevent violence on school grounds, early intervention is imperative. To achieve this goal, the Council recommends: (a) the Community-based justice roundtable model be implemented and maximized in school districts across the Commonwealth in order to address issues presented by at-risk youth; (b) the Department of Public Health and the Department of Education should assist schools in developing local school safety committees; and (c) the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Education should develop a train-the-trainer program for key school personnel in identifying and responding to children with behavioral issues. Other recommendations include improving the physical learning environment, school uniforms, implementing an anonymous student hotline in school districts, increasing law enforcement presence on school grounds, and implementing bullying prevention and life skills training programs. The Department of Education should conduct workshops and info about school safety measures such as clear book bags and metal detectors.

Critical incident management: While a truly determined person can never be absolutely prevented from carrying out his or her destructive plans, public safety professionals do have the proven ability to limit the damage that is done by these individuals. In all of the recent school shootings, emergency response has been shown to be a critical factor in saving lives and preventing further injuries and deaths. Advanced planning and preparation is essential to minimize the destruction of an unfolding tragedy. Emergency response guidelines and school safety measures should be implemented statewide. These guidelines should be comprehensive, yet flexible enough to be applied in a wide range of communities. In addition to an “Emergency Responder’s Toolkit”, school safety measures, and a coordinated response effort among relevant agencies, preparing for the influx of media coverage is also an important objective. To help manage the live coverage, the Council recommends the drafting of a “Memorandum of Understanding” among as many police departments and media outlets as possible.

Proposed Safe Schools Legislation: Currently, there is no requirement that school districts report crimes committed on school property to the Massachusetts Department of Education, therefore, there is a lack of data regarding school violence. The Council suggests that all crimes be reported to the Department of Education, on a biannual basis. We recommend that this be achieved administratively, if possible. In addition to mandatory reporting, the Council also recommends enacting enhanced penalties for violent crimes committed on school grounds. In order to ensure a safe environment, the message must be sent that violence at school will not be tolerated.

Funding: It is agreed that every agency involved in serving youth must bear some responsibility for addressing the problem of youth violence and must be willing to commit resources for implementing solutions. In response to the Governor’s Council on Youth Violence, the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division submitted a School Violence Prevention Program proposal to the Department of Justice in the fall of 1998. It was approved and awarded \$1 million of Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance grant funding to implement a pilot project (*Appendix B*). The requirements of the award are that it be used to implement the program abstract and any variation from the submitted proposal must be approved by the Department of Justice. We welcome the Governor’s review of the attached abstract and the Executive Office of Public Safety will apply for any modifications at the Governor’s request.

Long range objectives: The Council’s work is an ongoing effort and does not conclude with the submission of this report. Other initiatives will be addressed as long-term goals, such as creating a Youth Violence Web page, conducting focus groups or regional forums on youth violence, and reconstituting the council to include teachers, students, and parents.

The issue of violent students and schools is one which would take volumes of materials to adequately address. This Report which assembles the work of many reports, new articles, booklets and other sources is designed to provoke questions and provide some guidance to policymakers, educators, law enforcement, parents, students and others who are concerned with safe schools. It is not a definitive work. The work of many courageous educators, community leaders, parents and students are going on today and we need to find better ways to recognize their achievements. Where appropriate, we have endeavored to provide examples of school districts which have struggled with all of the policy ramifications of a particular issue.

INTRODUCTION

"We need to redouble our efforts to make sure our schools are safe."

Governor Paul Cellucci

April 22, 1999

THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON YOUTH VIOLENCE

Governor Paul Cellucci created the Governor's Council on Youth Violence on June 30, 1998, by Executive Order 406 (*Appendix A*). In accordance with this order, it is the Council's mission to review, recommend and report to the Governor, procedures and programs necessary to ensure safe schools across the Commonwealth. Such programs include violence prevention initiatives and emergency response protocol. Governor Cellucci selected a diverse collection of individuals to be Council members, including community leaders, school personnel, law enforcement officials, and state agency directors. In addition to the members designated by the Executive Order (EO), the Council has also consulted with other state agency officials, including representatives from the Massachusetts State Police and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. These two agencies have provided a wealth of information with respect to the critical incident response segment.

Governor Cellucci designated the Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety as the chairperson of the Council under the EO. Council members are assigned to one of three subcommittees, *Data and Information Gathering*, *Violence Prevention and Education*, and *Critical Incident Response/Crisis Intervention*. They have met independently to formulate ideas and strategies to combat youth violence. The full Council meets regularly to review and affirm the subcommittee's findings.

The Council has been compiling videotapes of national network programs, newspaper articles, and research materials, both on the Littleton, CO incident as well as selected national and state stories on school violence. Although far too voluminous to attach to this report, materials have been obtained from various conferences and seminars and are readily available for review at the Executive Office of Public Safety.

THE INCIDENCE OF YOUTH VIOLENCE

The issue of the behavior of young people is not a new concern. Tablets recovered from before 2000 B.C. describe the problems that society faced with its misbehaving youth. In his annual reports to the Commonwealth, Horace Mann cited the criminal behavior of young people to bolster his argument for the “common school” in the mid-1800’s. For more than twenty years, surveys of the American public show that the discipline and student behavior are the public’s top concerns with their schools. Combating violence in the public schools is a recurring focus of families, educators, business, religious and community leaders, as well as local and state policymakers across the country. No longer stereotyped as an issue endemic to large urban school districts, incidents of school violence and reports of weapons at schools are widespread and, as a matter of magnitude of harm, worsening.

Combating violence in schools is a constant focus of local school boards, media, and legislatures across the country. No longer confined to large urban school districts in crime-ridden cities, incidents of school violence are widespread and, by some accounts, growing daily. Recent school-related murders have occurred in small, rural, and predominantly white communities lacking histories of high-profile violence and high crime rates. Gangs, drugs, weapons, and juvenile crime are present in rural, suburban, and urban communities and schools. Violence crosses all social and economic boundaries, and no community should falsely believe that their schools and neighborhoods are immune. Efforts to curb youth violence must be continued and strengthened.

Although any crime committed in a school should be dealt with seriously, the violent victimization of youth on school grounds is intolerable. Unfortunately, the level of violence we have seen occurring on the streets of our nation is now spilling into our schools. During the 1996-1997 school year, 10% of all public schools across the nation reported at least one serious violent crime to the police or other law enforcement representative (Departments of Justice and Education, 1998). Massachusetts has been fortunate to have escaped the recent incidence of school fatalities and has not experienced a school-related death in over two years (*Appendix C*). National research indicates that students in larger schools (greater than 1,000 enrollment) experience higher rates of school crime than students in smaller schools, but we have learned that school violence can happen anywhere, regardless of school size. In addition to size and location of schools, we have also learned that school violence crosses all grade levels. In 1997, 4% of elementary schools reported one or more serious crimes compared to 19% and 21% of middle and high schools, respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998). The reality is that some school violence cannot be prevented. But there are steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of violent incidents and to minimize losses should an incident occur.

Despite the recent school violence tragedies experienced in Colorado and Georgia, it remains true that most schools across the country, including those in Massachusetts, are safe. In fact, students are more likely to experience violence while on the street or in their homes, than in the school environment. Interestingly, the 1997/98 Federal Education Department’s Gun-Free Schools Act Survey, reflects the fact that expulsions for weapons in schools have dropped by nearly one third. This data is based only on disciplinary action imposed and does not quantify the rate at which students actually carry firearms to school. Nonetheless, according to the survey, the rate of students expelled for bringing a weapon to school in Massachusetts dropped 15% from 1996/97 to 1997/98.

PERPETRATORS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Perpetrators of school violence can be of any race, socioeconomic status, academic ability, or physical appearance. Notions of the stereotypical perpetrator should be discarded as recent incidents dictate that the most violent offenders have responsible guardians, are good students, and have never been involved with the criminal justice system. However, there are signs that youth exhibit prior to committing acts of serious violence. These signs should be taken as an indicator that further analysis is needed to determine an appropriate intervention, and they should be used to aid in identifying and referring youth that may need help.

Over the past decade the focus of attention for our schools has been on the chronically disruptive or violent student. The issues of gangs, guns, and drugs have drawn the attention of social scientists, researchers, law enforcement, prosecutors, educators and policymakers. The profile of these students is relatively well-known and understood. Programs and policies have been established to address the issues of these students and there is some reason to believe that there is a level of success to such initiatives.

However, the events of the past several years have introduced a new and troubling profile of a violent student. A quick comparison illustrates the new issues:

Profile of Chronically Disruptive, Violent Youth

- Under-achiever in school; may be functionally illiterate.
- Often comes from unstable family environment.
- Begins tardiness in early grades, moving to truancy in middle and high schools; high possibility of drop-out.
- Identified as a bully in both elementary and secondary program.
- Petty property crimes begin in early teens, escalating to more serious levels of personal crimes.
- Alcohol abuse begins in early teens escalating to drug use and trafficking.
- May be identified by gang colors or other dress.
- May be associated with gangs or gang-like group.
- Weapons of choice are knives and handguns.

New Profile of Disturbed, Violent Youth

- Does reasonably well academically; may be gifted.
- Often comes from two-parent home.
- No issue with school attendance.
- May be a victim of bullying or social isolation in elementary and secondary grades.
- No pattern of prior involvement with the law.
- No pattern of any involvement with illegal substances.
- No particular pattern of self-identification by clothing.
- More often a loner with a small set of associates.
- An array of weapons are used including rifles and semi-automatic weapons.

There are a few common traits between the profiles: the students are angry, alienated from adults, and have access to weapons. From a policy perspective, some commonalities do not provide much comfort or assistance to those who must work most closely with youth.

The complexities of issue of youth violence cannot be addressed in isolation by a school or school district. However, there are important steps that a school districts may take to provide a safer learning environment. In addition, a school can serve as the forum for discussions involving community-wide responses to the issues contributing to violent behaviors as well as taking important steps to inculcate appropriate behaviors in the students in the school district.

For parents and teachers, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests to watch for the following behaviors as a potential warning sign for violent behavior:

School-Aged Child

- Has trouble paying attention and concentrating
- Often disrupts classroom activities
- Does poorly in school
- Frequently gets into fights with other children in school
- Reacts to disappointments, criticism or teasing with extreme and intense anger, blame, or revenge
- Watches many violent television shows, movies or violent video games
- Has few friends and is often rejected by other children because of behavior
- Makes friends with others known to be unruly or aggressive
- Consistently does not listen to adults
- Is not sensitive to the feelings of others
- Is cruel or violent towards pets or other animals
- Is easily frustrated

Pre-teen or Adolescent

- Consistently does not listen to authority figures
- Pays no attention to the feelings or rights of others
- Mistreats people and seems to rely on physical violence or threats of violence to solve problems
- Often expresses the feeling that life has treated him unfairly
- Does poorly in school and often skips class
- Misses school frequently for no identifiable reason
- Gets suspended from or drops out from school
- Joins a gang, gets involved in fighting, stealing or destroying property
- Drinks alcohol and/or inhalants or drugs

EXISTING YOUTH VIOLENCE
INITIATIVES IN
MASSACHUSETTS

The Cellucci-Swift administration is committed to ensuring that our children grow up in a drug free, violence free environment. This commitment to violence prevention is truly a statewide one, and efforts span a variety of Secretariats, state agencies, and District Attorneys’ Offices.

The Council, as part of its mission, found it necessary to first account for these initiatives. It is important to determine what youth violence initiatives currently exist in the Commonwealth, as it would be beneficial to expand or replicate successful programs. Although this is not an exhaustive account of every violence prevention program in the state, as there are many local initiatives, a sample of the most prevalent state-supported programs is proscribed in this section.

It is important to note, although scientifically rigorous evaluations have not been performed to measure the impact of existing programs, successes have been identified through on-site observations and anecdotal information. Nonetheless, we recommend a comprehensive, documented analysis of current programming.

The following pages provide a listing of existing programs, arranged according to the agency through which they are administered.

Executive Office of Public Safety11
MA District Attorneys’ Offices15
Executive Office of Health and Human Services21
Department of Education27
Governor’s Task Force on Hate Crimes29
MA Attorney General30

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POLICE

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS AWARENESS TRAINING (The P.E.A.T Program)

PROGRAM TYPE: State Police officers train school staff in violence prevention and response.

PROGRAM GOAL: Reduction of school violence through staff preparedness, enforcement of rules and laws, awareness, and teachings.

TARGET POPULATION: School Faculty/Staff.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The *P.E.A.T* program trains educators in establishing strategies to reduce school violence, while developing a stronger relationship with their local police department. Presentations begin with a 30-40 minute seminar by state police officers, followed by several optional mini-symposiums, including an expanded prevention program, an effective response program, incident management planning, and hostage negotiation simulation training. School districts may elect to have any or all of these classes taught at their schools.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

PROGRAM TYPE: Program educates youth on preventing interpersonal violence.

PROGRAM GOAL: Awareness and reduction of domestic and teen dating violence.

TARGET POPULATION: Junior and Senior High School Students.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: This three-part teen dating violence curriculum educates junior and senior high school students on recognizing the early warning signs of violent relationships.

COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICERS

PROGRAM TYPE: Program involves State Police Officers in the safety education of students.

PROGRAM GOAL: Improve the overall safety of students.

TARGET POPULATION: Kindergarten through 12th grade.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Community Service Officers instruct grades K – 12 on safety issues involving security, school bus safety, assault, and violence prevention. Officers go into schools across the state and lecture on these topics.

GANG RESISTANCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING (G.R.E.A.T.) PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE: Gang education and resistance techniques training.

PROGRAM GOAL: To provide students with the necessary skills and information to resist gangs and acts of random violence.

TARGET POPULATION: Elementary and Middle Students.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Gang Resistance Education And Training Program (G.R.E.A.T.) is designed to help students set goals, resist pressures, learn how to resolve conflicts without violence, and understand how gangs and youth violence impact the quality of their lives. G.R.E.A.T. students discover for themselves the ramifications drug/alcohol use and violence.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY

PROGRAMS DIVISION

COPS AND KIDS

PROGRAM TYPE: After-school youth activities.
PROGRAM GOAL: To prevent youth substance abuse and violence.
TARGET POPULATION: Middle School Students.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Eighteen Massachusetts police departments offer after-school programs in their communities during the hours of 3:00-6:00 P.M., for middle school youth (ages 12-14). This program creates positive relationships between law enforcement and youth, improving educational and recreational opportunities, enhancing self-esteem, and encouraging personal, social, and civic development. The funded communities offer a wide variety of programs including, but not limited to: athletic activities, computer training, community service, tutoring and homework assistance, field trips, conflict resolution and mediation training, peer leadership, and peer counseling.

TITLE V - LOCAL DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS

PROGRAM TYPE: Delinquency prevention and early intervention.
PROGRAM GOAL: To address youth risk factors at the earliest appropriate stage.
TARGET POPULATION: Youth ages 0-17.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The program aims to introduce positive factors to protect juveniles either by reducing the impact of risks or by changing the way a person responds to risks. Eighteen local communities implemented programming last year and it is anticipated that twenty-six communities will implement Title V programs during state fiscal year 2000. The programs teach and promote responsible behavior, resiliency, healthy beliefs, clear standards, and bonding with adults and peers. Program activities include the implementation of an alternative high school, youth centers, truancy prevention strategies, court diversion, after-school programs, and recreational activities.

DRUG ABUSE RESISTANCE EDUCATION (D.A.R.E.)

PROGRAM TYPE: Youth drug education.
PROGRAM GOAL: To provide students with the necessary techniques and decision-making skills to resist peer pressure to experiment with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
TARGET POPULATION: Kindergarten through 12th grade.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) is a comprehensive drug and violence prevention education program for children in kindergarten through 12th grade. The D.A.R.E. curriculum is taught in 19 countries by law enforcement officers and is designed to equip elementary, middle, and high school students with the skills to resist substance abuse, violence, and gangs. The program follows a carefully structured curriculum, focusing on topics such as: personal safety, drug use and misuse, consequences of behavior, resisting peer pressure, building self esteem, assertiveness training, managing stress without drugs, media images of drug use, role models, and support systems. The core curriculum requires that a highly trained police officer enter into fifth and sixth grade classrooms every week for 17 weeks. The program promotes positive attitudes in students toward the police, and instills a greater respect for the law and society.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY

CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE:	Delinquency intervention and reduction of recidivism.
PROGRAM GOAL:	To assist youth already involved in the criminal justice system.
TARGET POPULATION:	At-risk youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Challenge Grant Program provides incentives for states to develop, adopt, and improve policies and programs in one or more of ten specified Challenge Activities, as determined by Congress. Three activities are currently being implemented in the Commonwealth. They include aftercare services for juveniles involved in the juvenile system, programming for adjudicated delinquents, and community-based alternatives to incarceration.

COMMUNITY POLICING

PROGRAM TYPE:	Community Partnerships.
PROGRAM GOAL:	To aid in the collaboration between law enforcement, local government, businesses and citizens to improve the overall quality of life.
TARGET POPULATION:	All citizens.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	Community Policing is both a philosophy and an organizational strategy that recognizes the importance of collaboration between law enforcement, all branches of government, private stakeholders, and the citizens of a community, to encourage working together to address the problems of crime, fear of crime, and factors that detract from the overall quality of life in their communities. Many police departments in the Commonwealth utilize Community Policing funds to participate in youth violence prevention initiatives, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 142 departments support recreational activities for young people as a positive, healthy alternative to drugs and violence. 260 police officers from 138 communities serve as School Resource Officers. School Resource Officers monitor schools to prevent and respond to school violence and drug problems, as well as serve as a contact for students, parents, and school personnel regarding school-related problems and safety issues.

NATIONAL GUARD

DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION YOUTH PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE:	Youth violence prevention.
PROGRAM GOAL:	To provide youth with violence prevention training, along with teaching values, skills, and physical fitness.
TARGET POPULATION:	Youth ages 9-18 years old.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Drug Demand Reduction Youth Program is comprised of a variety of educational programs. One program, the Operation Challenge After-School Adventure program, involves 25 6 th , 7 th , and 8 th graders. Thirty-five (35) youth ages 9-12 participated in D.A.R.E. (Drug Education for Youth). Leadership Reaction Course/Rappel Tower Operations challenges 25 high school students. An additional 25 high school students participated in the Youth Leadership Ropes Adventure Course. The Minuteman Challenge Academy is an alternative program for 16-18 yr. old high school dropouts. The goals of this program include providing youth with violence prevention training, along with teaching values, skills, and physical fitness.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICES

SAFETY EDUCATION

PROGRAM TYPE: School administrators' safety education.

PROGRAM GOAL: Educate school administrators about class B and C substances, explosive devices and appropriate response.

TARGET POPULATION: School administrators, police, fire and other safety personnel.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Fire Services provides safety education to school administrators about fireworks, class B and C substances, letter and package bombs, military ordnance, explosives made from recipes on the internet and instruction on how to handle a situation when a device is found. A more extensive program is available to police, fire and other safety personnel involving explosive recognition and bomb threat protocols.

MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICES

COMMUNITY-BASED JUSTICE FORUMS

PROGRAM TYPE:	The program promotes interagency and community-based services for at-risk youth.
PROGRAM GOAL:	To regularly exchange information and create coordinated services for at-risk youth thereby diverting appropriate youth from the court system and DYS.
TARGET POPULATION:	At-risk youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	Representatives from the courts, schools, police departments, DYS, DSS, and community agencies meet on a regular basis to exchange information and create coordinated services for at-risk youth. These forums are designed to ensure swift prosecution of the most dangerous youth, while at the same time, diverting appropriate youth from the court system and DYS.

TRUANCY PREVENTION

PROGRAM TYPE:	Truancy prevention programs.
PROGRAM GOAL:	To improve school attendance among school age youth.
TARGET POPULATION:	School age youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The program is a collaborative effort between the District Attorneys' Offices, school systems, law enforcement, and area service providers to improve school attendance among school age youth. During the 1997-1998 school year, each program developed a comprehensive strategy focusing on incentives and sanctions for truants. Assessment surveys were conducted and Steering Committees were formed to determine which school districts would be targeted. Program components include school attendance officers, counseling, tutoring, incentives, Saturday schools, and mediators/referral services for parents and students.

D.A.R.E. SUMMER DAY PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE:	Youth drug education.
PROGRAM GOAL:	To reinforce the D.A.R.E. message introduced during the school year.
TARGET POPULATION:	At-risk youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Summer Day Programs utilizes educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities during the summer recess to reinforce the D.A.R.E. message introduced during the school year. Eleven District Attorneys and four cities received this grant, which will serve an estimated 5,892 youth starting on May 1, 1999 and continuing through the summer. The Summer Day Program Educational workshop includes lessons in violence prevention, cultural diversity, decision-making, and gang resistance. The D.A.R.E. Summer Day Program is a unique collaboration among district attorneys, law enforcement, educators, volunteer organizations, and public health agencies geared toward at-risk children.

MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICES

BRISTOL COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE: Diversion program for first-time, nonviolent juvenile offenders.

PROGRAM GOAL: Reduction of juvenile delinquent behavior through counseling/education, school tutoring and community service.

TARGET POPULATION: Nonviolent Juvenile offenders.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: This eight-week course addresses substance abuse and teaches youth to act in a non-violent manner. Students are individually tutored and each must perform community service acts. The program past recidivism rate has been 17%.

COMPREHENSIVE COMPETENCIES PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE: Saturday program oversees school truancy and suspension program students.

PROGRAM GOAL: Reduce youth truancy in schools and equip youth with a better understanding of the steps needed to make good decisions, stay in school and plan for the future.

TARGET POPULATION: Secondary school students.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Comprehensive Competencies Program targets secondary school truancy and suspension program students. Students participate in a three-hour Saturday session at the junior high schools. The session consists of equal parts counseling, tutoring/homework, and school based community service. Qualified adults assist students with their projects and UMASS Dartmouth students serve as role models. A bilingual component is available if necessary.

HAMPDEN COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

COMMUNITY RISK ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT (CRAM)

PROGRAM TYPE: Interagency initiative to respond to school violence and delinquency.

PROGRAM GOAL: To enhance principals' discretion in supervising the operations, management, and safety of their schools.

TARGET POPULATION: Students charged with a felony or those who have exhibited behavior in school that may qualify them as dangerous.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: CRAM is an innovative partnership comprising the District Attorney, Springfield Public Schools, Department of Youth Services, Department of Social Services, Springfield Police Department, Springfield Juvenile Court and the Springfield District Court Probation. CRAM is the primary mechanism through which these agencies share and exchange information pertaining to juveniles. CRAM partners are able to access, share, and discuss pertinent information regarding students whose actions outside of school have led to felony charges and whose behavior in school may qualify them as dangerous to their peers, teachers, and staff. The CRAM initiative, encompassing the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, allows principals to have more discretion in supervising the operations, management, and safety of their schools.

MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICES

ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

JUVENILE JUSTICE TEAMS

PROGRAM TYPE:	Program oversees the prosecution of juvenile offenders.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Maximizing community protection and delinquency prevention through consistent and appropriate responses to juvenile crime.
TARGET POPULATION:	Juvenile offenders.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Juvenile Justice Teams, comprised of an Assistant District Attorney, a Juvenile Justice Coordinator and a Victim/Witness Advocate, provide a consistent and appropriate continuum of responses to juvenile crime by reviewing all juvenile cases for appropriate placement from Priority Prosecution to Juvenile Diversion. The Juvenile Justice Teams oversees the prosecution of juveniles, maximizing community protection and delinquency prevention by responding immediately and effectively to incidents and concerns raised by schools and communities.

JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE:	Diversion program for first-time, nonviolent juvenile offenders.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Reduction of juvenile delinquent behavior through counseling/education, community service and restitution.
TARGET POPULATION:	Juvenile offenders 7-17 years old.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Juvenile Diversion Program is an innovative program that circumvents the traditional court process for select first-time, nonviolent juvenile offenders and their families. Youth are provided the opportunity to participate in appropriate counseling/education, perform community service and, in the case of property damage, pay restitution. The program is available in all of the Juvenile and District Courts in Essex County.

FLASHPOINT MEDIA LITERACY PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE:	Media literacy educational and skills program for youth.
PROGRAM GOAL:	To enhance critical thinking and decision-making skills in youth.
TARGET POPULATION:	Youth 13-17 years old.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	Flashpoint is an educational intervention program designed to provide youth in the juvenile justice system and other high-risk youth with media literacy skills. The program teaches youth not only to deconstruct the often violent, unrealistic, and harmful messages in the media, but to enable youth to use these same critical thinking skills to make better decisions in their own lives. Participants attend twelve 90-minute sessions targeted at improving their observation of the underlying messages about violence, prejudice, and drugs and alcohol from different media outlets.

MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICES

YOUTHFUL DIVERSION PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE:	Diversion program for first-time youthful substance abuse offenders.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Reduction of alcohol and drug-related incidents through education and enhancement of decision-making skills.
TARGET POPULATION:	Youth 17-21 years old.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Youthful Diversion Program is a program piloted in several courts working with a largely underserved population, first-time youthful offenders charged with minor substance abuse offenses. The offender is offered the opportunity to participate in counseling and education programs and perform community service in lieu of going through the traditional court process.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE

PROGRAM TYPE:	Interagency, school and community initiative to discuss youth violence.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Coordinate the prevention and intervention of youth violence through the sharing of information.
TARGET POPULATION:	All youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Community Collaborative Initiative enables regular meetings between administrators, law enforcement, probation, representatives from the District Attorney's Office and the Departments of Social Services, Youth Services and Mental Health to discuss youth violence prevention and intervention.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

YOUTH VIOLENCE COALITION

PROGRAM TYPE:	Program enables youth and adults to work together in violence prevention and response.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Reduction of violence in relationships, school and the workplace through alternative responses.
TARGET POPULATION:	Youth and adults.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Youth Violence Coalition provides a forum for youth and adults to work together to create alternatives to violence, while simultaneously advancing youth leadership and skill development. The focal point is an annual Youth Violence Conference with 30 youth and 30 adult participants, and 42 youth and adult presenters discussing violence in relationships, schools and the workplace.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE:	Program educates the community and schools concerning youth violence.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Reduce youth violence in schools and the community.
TARGET POPULATION:	All youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Education and Outreach Program offers workshops for community and school personnel to address the needs of youth. Some key programs include: Confronting School Violence, Creating Healthy Relationships, Personal Safety Awareness, The Yellow Dress which addresses teen dating violence, Bullying and Name-Calling which provides strategies for confronting demeaning behavior, and the Youth at Risk Program for volunteers in community agencies.

MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICES

NORTH QUABBIN COMMUNITY COALITION

PROGRAM TYPE: Community discussions concerning youth violence.
 PROGRAM GOAL: Reduction of youth violence.
 TARGET POPULATION: All youth.
 PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The North Quabbin Community Coalition offers roundtable discussions on youth violence. Attendees include school administrators, teachers, parents, and community leaders.

REINVENTING JUSTICE, JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE: Probationary interventions for juvenile offenders.
 PROGRAM GOAL: To divert youth from juvenile court by probationary interventions addressing needs.
 TARGET POPULATION: Juvenile offenders.
 PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Juvenile Diversion Program, which includes both delinquency and CHINS diversions, is premised on statistical studies which indicate that children who are exposed to juvenile court frequently have multiple appearances. Probationary interventions are utilized to address issues identified by needs assessment.

THE SYNERGY PROJECT

PROGRAM TYPE: Interagency, school and community initiative to discuss youth violence.
 PROGRAM GOAL: Coordinate the prevention and intervention of youth violence through the sharing of information.
 TARGET POPULATION: All youth.
 PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Synergy Project is loosely based on the Community-Based Juvenile Justice model. Meetings are held among school officials, law enforcement, probation, representatives from the District Attorney's Office and the Departments of Social Services, Youth Services and Mental Health to identify youth demonstrating troublesome behaviors that endanger school communities.

REINVENTING JUSTICE

PROGRAM TYPE: Delinquency prevention and alternatives to adjudication.
 PROGRAM GOAL: To increase court and community collaboration in developing delinquency prevention strategies.
 TARGET POPULATION: All youth.
 PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Hampshire County Reinventing Justice supports the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee and Alternatives Working Group which focus on court and community collaboration, developing delinquency prevention strategies and alternatives to adjudication.

MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICES

PLYMOUTH COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

MENTORING THROUGH ART PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE: Art program.
PROGRAM GOAL: To create a positive social and learning environment for at risk youth through art.
TARGET POPULATION: At-risk youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The District Attorney's Office in collaboration with Stonehill College initiated a "Mentoring Through Art" program at the Fuller Museum in Brockton. During the 14 week program, at-risk youth are paired with Stonehill College student mentors who work together to create a positive social and learning environment through photography outreach.

MOCK TRIAL PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE: Drug and alcohol prevention education program.
PROGRAM GOAL: To educate youth on decision-making, risk-taking, and the consequences of drug and alcohol use.
TARGET POPULATION: Elementary and junior high school students.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Plymouth County Mock Trial program is a collaborative effort by the local police departments, the participating school's teaching staff, and the District Attorney's Office. The Mock Trial encompasses a four-week drug and alcohol prevention education program and culminates in a mock trial of a criminal case involving juvenile drug and alcohol abuse, with roles being played by the District Attorney and staff members, in addition to local police representatives and students.

SUFFOLK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

RAPID INDICTMENT PROSECUTION PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE: Prosecution of violent youthful offenders through collaborative efforts with detectives.
TARGET POPULATION: Offenders ages 17-23 years old.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Rapid Indictment Prosecution Program involves Assistant District Attorneys responding with area detectives to shootings and armed robbery calls involving individuals between the ages of 17 and 23. The ADA provides legal assistance and advises the victims and witnesses on appearing before an investigative grand jury.

GANG UNIT

PROGRAM TYPE: Prosecution of violent offenders.
PROGRAM GOAL: Target the most violent offenders for prosecution.
TARGET POPULATION: Violent offenders between the ages of 17-25 years old.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: In addition to targeting the most violent offenders, the Gang Unit prosecutors also participate in classroom instruction and mock trial competitions in area high schools and teach an eight week course on the criminal justice system to 5th graders in several Boston middle schools.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

MASSACHUSETTS VIOLENCE PREVENTION TASK FORCE

PROGRAM TYPE: Violence reduction and prevention program.
PROGRAM GOAL: To attain peace, health and justice for all citizens.
TARGET POPULATION: All citizens.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Violence Prevention Task Force is a collaboration of legislators, federal, state, local and community organizations and institutions committed to working together to attain peace, health and justice for everyone in the Commonwealth. The Task Force supports community violence prevention projects, awards funds to establish local violence prevention coalitions, offers training on developing coalitions to prevent violence, and sponsors an annual violence prevention conference.

MENTORS IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION (MVP)

PROGRAM TYPE: Program educates youth on interpersonal violence.
PROGRAM GOAL: Awareness and reduction of violence against women.
TARGET POPULATION: Middle and High School students.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: In collaboration with Northeastern University, this program provides a mixed gender team of instructors to teach middle and high school students about men's violence against women, and trains peer leaders as empowered bystanders. MVP stresses the importance of involving men to prevent other men from engaging in men's violence against women. Instructors use examples from film, television, news and personal experience to help students identify abusive patterns and develop strategies to intervene safely. MVP works closely with schools funded for Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Intervention through the Massachusetts Department of Education.

WORDS NOT WEAPONS

PROGRAM TYPE: Program trains students in peer leadership.
PROGRAM GOAL: To reduce the use of weapons and violence in schools.
TARGET POPULATION: High School students.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: A community and school initiative to reduce the use of weapons among high school students, using the peer leadership model to reduce violence in schools. Using a common framework, each school develops a project to promote problem-solving alternatives to violence. The framework for Words Not Weapons was created in youth workshops and is tailored to each school's unique population and community. Youth work with an advisor to plan activities, and peer leaders are trained to spread the message to other students. At some sites the program is administered directly through the school while other sites involve Massachusetts Prevention Center staff.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

VIOLENCE PREVENTION SURVEILLANCE PROJECTS

PROGRAM TYPE:	Through random survey and hospital emergency department reporting, the program monitors incidences of violence and intentional injuries.
PROGRAM GOAL:	To track assault related injuries.
TARGET POPULATION:	All citizens.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Emergency Department Surveillance and Coordinated Injury Prevention Project (EDSCIP), is a statewide surveillance system used to track incidence and causes of injuries treated in hospital emergency departments, including assault-related injuries and self-injuries. The Weapon Related Injury Surveillance System is a statewide surveillance system for gunshot wounds and stabbings based on emergency department reports, police NIBRS data, crime lab ballistics data, death certificates, and hospital discharge data. Woman Abuse Tracking in Clinics and Hospitals (WATCH), is a hospital emergency department-based surveillance system to track intimate partner violence of women 12 years and older.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION COLLABORATIONS STAFFED AT DPH

PROGRAM TYPE:	Program promotes community health networks.
PROGRAM GOAL:	To improve the health and well being of residents.
TARGET POPULATION:	All citizens.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	There are 27 Community Health Network Areas (CHNA's) in the Commonwealth that bring together public, nonprofit and private sector individuals and organizations to improve the health and well being of their communities and residents. Many CHNA's have identified violence prevention as a public health priority. After looking at data on their communities, many CHNA's identified violence prevention as a public health priority. CHNA's approach violence prevention broadly or narrowly, depending on the needs of their community. CHNA's addressing violence have a youth component, and some target youth exclusively.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

PROGRAM TYPE:	Program educates adults and youth about violence prevention and response.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Awareness and reduction of domestic and youth violence.
TARGET POPULATION:	Youth, at-risk youth, gay and lesbian youth, and pediatricians.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	DPH provides a number of informational and educational programs about youth violence. <i>Adolescent Perpetrators Intervention</i> tailors adult batterer's intervention services to the needs of adolescent populations. <i>Healthy Tomorrows Pediatric Family Violence Awareness Project</i> has educated pediatricians on the warning signs of domestic violence and its effects on children. The <i>Violence Prevention / Intentional Injury Program</i> coordinates and integrates DPH violence prevention efforts, and links with other state agencies, the public, and community-based programs to develop and expand efforts to prevent violence and intentional injury. <i>Enhanced School Health Service Programs</i> strengthen existing school health service programs and implement comprehensive health education, including violence prevention. <i>Gay and Lesbian Youth Support Services</i> provide support to projects designed to decrease youth suicide, violence and other problems faced by GLBT youth at home and in school.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

MASSACHUSETTS PREVENTION CENTERS

PROGRAM TYPE: Program addresses youth violence in the community.

PROGRAM GOAL: Reduce and prevent youth violence.

TARGET POPULATION: All youth.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: These centers are utilized to support peer leadership projects that address different aspects of youth violence in communities. Peace through Education and Community Empowerment kits (P.E.A.C.E. kits), are available through the Centers and provide resources to help develop youth violence prevention activities. Violence Prevention Month in May of each year provides a framework to highlight and promote the community-level work across the state in small towns and big cities, supported by schools, police, advocacy groups, health centers, faith organizations, all with the goal of preventing violence.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

DAY REPORTING CENTERS

PROGRAM TYPE: Day and evening community support services for youth.
PROGRAM GOAL: Supervise youth in the community.
TARGET POPULATION: DYS committed and court involved youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: In conjunction with local police, courts, and the Department of Probation, DYS operates community-based Day Reporting Centers. Both DYS committed youth as well as certain court involved youth that live at home, are required to report to the center. Staff supervise the youth while they are in the community, providing a range of services including monitoring, counseling, recreational activities and tutoring. The centers are open during the evening for added support.

SHORT AND LONG TERM RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMMING

PROGRAM TYPE: Residential services for youth.
PROGRAM GOAL: Assist youth transitioning between community, facilities or home.
TARGET POPULATION: DYS committed youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Less secure residential services are provided for youth transitioning back into the community, leaving facilities, or for those whose homes are unsafe or unstable. These residential programs are staff-secure and typically are located in residential areas. Short-term programming lasts from 2 - 6 months, while long term lasts 9 - 12 months. Often treatment services focus upon crisis intervention and violence prevention.

SHORT TERM COMMITTED UNITS

PROGRAM TYPE: Residential services for youth.
PROGRAM GOAL: Assist youth transitioning back to the community.
TARGET POPULATION: DYS newly committed youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: These units serve newly committed youth and youth revoked and returned by DYS because they are having adjustment problems in the community. The average length of stay is 30-90 days. Services include education, behavior management, and recreation. Treatment services focus upon crisis prevention and violence prevention.

LONG TERM COMMITTED UNITS

PROGRAM TYPE: Residential services for youth.
PROGRAM GOAL: Provide supervision and treatment services.
TARGET POPULATION: DYS committed youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: These long-term units serve DYS committed youth. The average length of stay is 8-12 months. Services include education, behavior management, medical and recreation. Treatment services focus upon crisis prevention and violence prevention. It teaches pro-social skills and anger management. Treatment may also be offense specific such as sex offender treatment or drug and alcohol abuse services.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DETENTION UNITS

PROGRAM TYPE:	Serves youth awaiting court action, revocation or facility placement.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Provide supervision and treatment services.
TARGET POPULATION:	DYS committed youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	House youth charged with an offense and who are being held on bail awaiting court action. These units may also house juveniles who are committed and are awaiting placement in another facility or program, or who are in the process of revocation from a community placement. Services include education, behavior management, medical, recreation, violence prevention and substance abuse.

BOOT CAMPS

PROGRAM TYPE:	Intensive educational program for DYS youth.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Reduce juvenile delinquency through physical training and an intensive educational curriculum.
TARGET POPULATION:	DYS committed youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	DYS operates three “boot camp” programs in conjunction with the Massachusetts National Guard. These 45-day programs provide delinquent youth with physical training an intensive educational curriculum. On average, 71% of juveniles graduating from boot camp have earned their GED through the program.

HOMEWARD BOUND PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE:	Program involves youth in rigorous physical activity.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Reduce juvenile delinquency by promoting self-esteem.
TARGET POPULATION:	DYS committed youth.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	Homeward Bound is a unique, short-term, environmentally secure program designed on the Outward Bound esteem building model. The “Forestry Camp” serves committed youth and offers a short-term intensive program of boating, hiking, camping, rock climbing, cross country skiing and obstacle courses. The program offers individual, group and violence prevention counseling. The program has also been used for both commitment and detention diversion for high-end probationers. It uses a modified version of Aggression Replacement Training, which focuses on violence prevention and substance abuse issues.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

SAFE START AND SAFE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

PROGRAM TYPE: Program addresses youth exposure to violence and prevention.
PROGRAM GOAL: Reduction of youth exposure to violence in the community and schools.
TARGET POPULATION: All youth and child witnesses to violence.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Safe Start and Safe Schools are two separate federally funded grant proposals of which DSS has been and continues to be a participant. In the cities of Springfield and Boston, the Safe Start Initiatives hope to prevent exposure to violence and counsel children who are witnesses to violence. In the cities of Holyoke, Brockton and Lynn, the Safe Schools program addresses youth violence in schools.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INITIATIVES

PROGRAM TYPE: Program trains service providers in domestic violence cases.
PROGRAM GOAL: Provide treatment services for witnesses to violence.
TARGET POPULATION: Children and teens who have witnessed violence.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: DSS Specialists provide training and case consultation on DSS cases where children have witnessed domestic violence and/or teens are involved in abusive dating relationships. It has been estimated that 50% of child abuse and neglect cases also involve abuse of the mother. DSS collaborates with DPH to design groups for teen offenders and to train community agencies on adolescent issues.

ADOLESCENT OUTREACH PROGRAM

PROGRAM TYPE: Program prepares youth for independent living.
PROGRAM GOAL: To enhance the success of youth moving from placement back to the community.
TARGET POPULATION: Youth ages 6-22 years old.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Adolescent Outreach Program prepares youth, particularly those determined to be at high risk for failure in the transitional living process, for moving from placement to independence thereby strengthening their chances of leading productive lives within the community after discharge.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Foundation formula (M.G.L. c.70) is the basis for funding public schools in Massachusetts. It is a complex formula but is essentially a zero-base, per-student formula which seeks to provide for all of the operational aspects of a school. The proponents of the formula had envisioned that it would be used by a school district as a template to ascertain how funds were being spent. Two of the factors in the formula are of interest to this discussion: the allocation for “expanded program” (after-school activities) and “professional development”. The latter amount is supposed to be spent to help train teachers, staff and others. It is significant due to the need for better training on classroom management and safe school practices. The allocation for expanded program seeks to address the need for after-school programs. The exact amount for these allocations for any school district may be obtained from the Massachusetts Department of Education.

FOUNDATION BUDGET FUNDS (PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

PROGRAM TYPE: Public funding of school system (Chapter 70).
PROGRAM GOAL: To improve the performance of teachers and administrators.
TARGET POPULATION: Teachers, administrators, school council members.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Under the provisions of the Education Reform Act, all educators must engage in professional development. Further, districts and schools are supposed to develop professional development plans. In addition to the pedagogical needs of a school and substantive training to address the MCAS standards, there should be some focus on the training to ensure a safer school environment.

FOUNDATION BUDGET FUNDS (EXPANDED PROGRAM)

PROGRAM TYPE: Public funding of school system (Chapter 70)
PROGRAM GOAL: To provide for after-school activities for students (K-12)
TARGET POPULATION: Students, K-12th grade.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Schools should be providing for after-school programs to address a variety of societal and educational needs. The formula sought to provide an allocation for such programs.

EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES/MCAS (AFTER-SCHOOL FUNDS)

PROGRAM TYPE: A grant program to address the academic deficiencies of students as demonstrated on the state assessment program (MCAS).
PROGRAM GOAL: To increase the academic achievement of students in schools.
TARGET POPULATION: Students, mostly focused on grades 3-10.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Given the results of the MCAS, increased allocations were provided to quickly improve student performance. As many school districts have chosen to use these funds to provide after-school classes (extended learning opportunities), the allocation is included here.

HEALTH PROTECTION FUNDS (HPF)

PROGRAM TYPE: Program provides a health education curriculum for youth.
PROGRAM GOAL: Awareness and prevention of risk behaviors affecting health.
TARGET POPULATION: Pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Health Protection Funds program prioritizes: Tobacco education, prevention and cessation activities; implementation of a pre-kindergarten – 12th grade health education curriculum, including components of guidance and counseling, nursing and mental health services, physical education, family and consumer sciences education, and nutrition services. Violence prevention and substance abuse education and prevention are also addressed.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT (SDFSCA)

PROGRAM TYPE: Supports prevention programs aimed at school violence and substance abuse.

PROGRAM GOAL: Provide school environments that are free of violence and substance abuse through parental and community involvement.

TARGET POPULATION: All students.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: SDFSCA federally funds activities that support local schools and community programs that prevent violence around schools. The goal is to prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs; involve parents; and coordinate with related federal, state, and community efforts and resources. All school districts are eligible and at least 95% participate.

SAFE SCHOOLS FOR GAY AND LESBIAN STUDENTS PROGRAM (SSGLS)

PROGRAM TYPE: Program educates on school-based violence and suicide prevention.

PROGRAM GOAL: Create and maintain a safe, supportive school environment.

TARGET POPULATION: Gay and lesbian students.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The SSGLS Program provides funds to high school programs for the active promotion of school-based violence and suicide prevention. Activities are designed at the local level to create and maintain safe, supportive school environments for gay and lesbian students.

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PROJECT

PROGRAM TYPE: Program educates teens and school personnel on dating violence prevention and response.

PROGRAM GOAL: Reduction of teen dating violence through educational programs.

TARGET POPULATION: All students and school staff.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The TDVIPP provides funding to 54 school districts for educational programs to prevent teens from becoming involved with dating-related violence. They also offer safe intervention strategies as well as educate school personnel and community members to recognize the warning signs of teen dating violence.

GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON HATE CRIMES

PROGRAM TYPE:	Task Force researches and develops solutions to hate-motivated violence in schools.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Improve reporting and reduction of hate-motivated violence in schools through a combined effort of school personnel, law enforcement and community-based organizations.
TARGET POPULATION:	High school students.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Task Force researches and develops comprehensive, coordinated solutions to prejudice and hate-motivated violence in our schools. The project is a long-term solution that builds on community resources by strengthening communication and partnerships between schools, law enforcement, and community-based organizations.

In 1998 the Task Force initiated the Civil Rights Project to address the issue of hate crimes in Commonwealth schools. The project launched a first-of-its-kind website, www.stopthehate.org, designed to give support, information, and resource referrals to students and educators.

PLANNED ANTI-HATE CRIMES PROGRAMMING FOR FY '00

PROGRAM TYPE:	Programs will educate youth on diversity awareness and hate-crimes prevention.
PROGRAM GOAL:	Reduce hate-crime victimization by potential offenders and perpetrators through diversity training.
TARGET POPULATION:	Potential hate-crime offenders and perpetrators.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW:	The Task Force's anti-hate crime programming for fiscal year 2000 is aimed at creating an environment of respect thereby preventing hate crime victimization in our schools.

During the 1999-2000 school year, the Student Civil Rights Project will initiative pilot programs of civil rights teams in seven high schools. Teams will consist of 12 students, and school and faculty advisors, who will be trained on established protocol for responding to civil rights violations. The Task Force will assist teams through online support and on-call support through the Student Civil Rights Director.

The Task Force is proposing a diversity awareness-training seminar for youth in trouble for potential hate activity. The proposal includes a correctional training protocol that can offer remedial sanctions to school administrators, involving 30 hours of classroom-style instruction and 10 or more hours of community service. The second training model would require convicted hate crimes perpetrators to receive diversity awareness training as an element of sentencing. This training will be prison-based and correctional in approach, although not necessarily limited to convicted perpetrators. The goal would be forceful, short-term intervention to reduce the danger of recidivism, especially among younger violators. The Task Force will also attack the underreporting of hate crimes through outreach, training, and a detailed survey.

The State Police will establish a civil rights investigative team to investigate where hate crimes occur in the Commonwealth and will provide back up to local police departments faced with possible hate crimes.

MASSACHUSETTS ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

STUDENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION EXPERTS (SCORE)

PROGRAM TYPE: School mediation program.

PROGRAM GOAL: Conflict resolution through peer mediation.

TARGET POPULATION: All students.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The Massachusetts-based *SCORE* Program provides support to schools wishing to establish peer mediation programs. School mediations usually involve conflicts that start with rumors, threats, name-calling, theft, or damage to personal property. *SCORE* mediators complete at least 20 hours of training to help them learn skills used to help people who must work out their differences. The program currently operates in 26 different schools across the Commonwealth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A vast number of written materials have been produced by both governmental and private organizations that offer suggested programs and policies for combating violence in our schools. These suggested initiatives, while comprehensive in scope, provide us with a host of options from which we can select those most suited for Massachusetts. Bearing in mind unique school factors (e.g., urban/rural setting, grade level served), the following programs and initiatives present some options in the effort to promote safety and combat school violence.

While the issue of youth violence may not be new, the role of schools and the strategies employed by educators is still new and somewhat untested. A recent article from the Harvard Education Letter notes the issue: “Since the field of violence prevention is relatively young, evaluations of even the most widespread programs are still in the early stages.” (“What Makes a Good School Violence Prevention Program?”, *Harvard Education Letter*; January/February 1999) The research on many of these efforts illustrates the risks attendant to implementing something innovative: there are few programs which have **proven** to be effective. There has been some commentary that ineffective programs worsen the situation for students as the programs provide a false sense of security. Further, as the events of the 1998-99 school year demonstrate, schools which are regarded as high-achieving schools and which have resources dedicated to the prevention of violence may not thwart a deeply disturbed youth.

- At the Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, the school employed both surveillance cameras and an armed guard. Columbine High School was known as a high performing school academically and had fielded state championship teams in baseball, basketball and soccer in the 1990's.

- At Heritage High School in Conyers, Georgia, there was a thirty-five member school safety group established to develop and implement safe school strategies. The panel drew from many parts of the community and included an agent of the FBI. Heritage High School was listed as one of the top high schools in America in *U.S. News and World Report* and was recognized as one of Georgia's Schools of Excellence by the Georgia Department of Education.

Indeed, in a report of research on school safety undertaken by the Secret Service, the *New York Times* recently reported some distressing information: some school security efforts such as surveillance cameras and armed security may provide a perverse incentive to those disturbed students similar to the events of the past two school years. Simply stated, the surveillance cameras may provide the disturbed student with the audience he wants while the armed security officer provides the means to end the assault without capture. Such research makes the effort to make a safe school even more problematic.

INVENTORY, EVALUATION, AND COMPILATION OF EXISTING YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

"To know where you are headed, you must first know where you have been.."

Author Unknown

SUMMARY

The most difficult task facing the Governor's Council on Youth Violence is identifying ALL of the existing youth violence prevention programs at the federal, state, and local levels that currently operate in Massachusetts. Furthermore, once ascertained, there is little documented evidence to support an assertion of which programs are successful and worthy of replication. Nonetheless, strong collaborations and neighborhood coalitions have been developed as a result of these programs. Nationally, there is little data favoring particular prevention programs (*Appendix D*). Although many programs are too new to assess their impact on overall juvenile crime, the positive steps taken by communities as a result of these programs cannot be denied. The existence of these programs have assisted communities in moving forward to develop comprehensive prevention strategies, enhance resources, strengthen families and create a positive school climate. By inventorying and documenting current programs, followed by an impact evaluation to ensure that state resources are devoted to the most effective programs, the creation of a comprehensive directory of successful programs would be an invaluable resource for school districts and communities. To address these challenges, the Council recommends the following:

RECOMMENDATION ONE: The Executive Office of Public Safety, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Education should conduct an inventory of violence prevention programs administered through state agencies. In addition, the Department of Education should conduct a comprehensive survey/inventory of school districts to find out what schools are currently doing to promote violence prevention. There are many schools in the Commonwealth that have already instituted violence prevention programs, and it would be helpful to know what particular school districts are already doing to combat violence.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: The Department of Education, The Department of Public Health, and the Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division should conduct an impact evaluation of the inventoried prevention programs to develop "best practices." These evaluations should examine both the content and the impact of various programs currently in place across the state. It is important to assess and document the outcome of the intervention (i.e. reduction in violence, safer schools). This is essential in determining whether to replicate or expand existing programs.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: The Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Public Health, should develop a Directory of Anti-Violence Reduction Programs. The directory, which would be updated annually, would provide a summary of promising programs already in place across the State, as well as the names of individuals who can provide information to communities interested in establishing or expanding school violence prevention programs in their areas. This would be a great tool for schools in the preliminary stages of implementing violence prevention programs. This information should be made easily accessible through a Web site and a toll-free phone number.

EDUCATION

“Without first establishing discipline and maintaining order, teachers cannot begin to educate their students. And apart from the education, the school has the obligation to protect pupils from mistreatment by other children, and also to protect teachers themselves from violence by the few students whose conduct in recent years has prompted national concern.”

United States Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell
New Jersey v. T.L.O., 469 U.S. 325, 350 (concurring opinion)

SUMMARY

Simply stated, safe schools are orderly and purposeful places where students and staff are free to learn and teach without the threat of physical or psychological harm. They are characterized by sensitivity and tolerance for all individuals (including those of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds, gender and sexual preference differences). It is an environment of nonviolence, clear behavioral expectations, disciplinary policies that are consistently and fairly administered, support and recognition for positive behavior, and a sense of community on the school campus. It is a place where parents and the community feel welcome and strong partnerships are made with agencies and businesses to support the school’s agenda. Safe schools also are characterized by well-planned security procedures, established emergency response plans, timely maintenance, cleanliness, and a nice appearance of the campus and classrooms. For schools, the challenge is to nurture a welcoming environment for students, parents and the community while ensuring that safety issues are addressed. (See Appendix E for *High Standards for Students in Both Academics and Behaviors*)

There are several aspects to ensuring a safe school:

- *School-management issues.* These are programs that focus on discipline and student behavior, alternative schools, and cooperative relationships with police and law enforcement.
- *Educational and curriculum-based programs.* These are programs based on teaching students values through character education programs as well as behavior-management skills and nonviolent conflict resolution.
- *Environmental changes.* These are programs based on changing student behavior by changing students’ social or physical environment. This includes installing metal detectors and hiring security guards, but also includes larger-scale programs like setting up after-school programs and increasing or decreasing school size.

In order to heighten violence prevention awareness, school personnel, students, parents, and the community as a whole, need to be equipped with the tools to recognize warning signs of at-risk youth. In addition, students must be provided with the necessary resources to manage anger and resolve conflicts peacefully.

The options for student education are vast, and include a wide variety of violence and delinquency prevention curricula. Schools should incorporate an established violence prevention curriculum or offer one-time classes focusing on specific issues (e.g., the dangers of firearms, drug abuse prevention). Many schools across the country, including Massachusetts, offer instruction in conflict resolution, social skills, and peer education.

RECOMMENDATION ONE: Under M.G.L. c. 69, §1B, the Board of Education should establish statewide goals for Massachusetts schools. In addition to whatever other goals the Board might be establishing, the Board should make safer schools a priority for itself and school districts and follow up this goal setting with discussions about what should be done in schools to make them safer.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: Educating students for character should be infiltrated into the core curriculum in Massachusetts schools. As long as there have been public schools in Massachusetts, there has been a strong link between the role of the school to educate on content as well as character. Respect, tolerance and personal responsibility should be instilled in students at a young age and it should permeate the education process. The Department of Education should be charged with creating professional development programs focusing on character education.

EXAMPLE: Hudson Public School District

The Hudson Public Schools use curricula such Second Step and volunteerism through community-based learning (CSL) to instill what Superintendent Sheldon Berman calls the ethical engagement of their students.

The research on community service learning shows that students engaged in service-learning activities strengthen academic skills, civic attitudes, and skills for active citizenship. Service learning enriches curriculum and instruction by providing project-based, student-active instruction on real world problems. Service learning also has an impact on the community as a whole by creating the bridge between young people and their communities. Finally, through CSL experiences, students gain a sense that there is a greater ethical meaning to their life. They can develop an ethic of care for the well-being of others and service to our society and planet that they can carry with them far into the future.

More than 80% of Hudson's student body was involved in some form of service learning with 100% participation at the elementary level. Hudson's CSL program begins in kindergarten with all kindergartners being involved in such efforts as: a handicapped awareness program that extends into a "hoping" that raised \$3,000 for the March of Dimes last year; a student run recycling program tied to an environmental studies science unit; and a holiday toy drive linked to a social studies unit on community. Each grade develops its own initiative. For example, several classes of first graders develop an ongoing relationship with senior citizens at Hudson's local Senior Center that helps teach students basic literacy skills. Hudson's third grade raises money and collects food for our local Food Pantry. Hudson's fourth grade engages in an environmental field studies program that involves protecting and caring for wetlands and other natural areas near our schools. A number of the fifth grade classes work with classrooms of multiple-handicapped children to develop an awareness of and respect for diversity. Hudson's ninth grade English and Social Studies teachers collaborate on a year-long course with the essential questions of "What is a just society?" As part of this civics course, students study the Holocaust and other acts of genocide using the *Facing History and Ourselves* curriculum. To demonstrate what they have learned, they are required to find a way that they can help create a just society through a service learning experience. These are only a sample of the many projects our teachers implemented. In some cases, classes were involved in several CSL projects. Most of our CSL projects are linked directly to the curriculum frameworks.

EXAMPLE: Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School, Franklin, MA

Several years ago, some parents who were concerned about the learning environment and academic achievement of their schools, convened and developed a proposal for a new school. Their proposal was awarded a charter in 1994 and the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School opened in the fall of 1996.

The mission of this Charter School is to provide their students with a classical academic education coupled with sound character development. The school is a focused, purposeful organization whose activities are undergirded by the school's "four pillars": parental involvement, core knowledge, community service and character development. The approach to character education, inspired by the school's namesake, Benjamin Franklin, is to encourage students to strive toward virtue daily. Students learn about and receive recognition for demonstrations of such virtues as honesty, discipline, compassion, frugality, industry, moderation, and humility. The school's performance over the initial term of its charter was recently reviewed by the Board of Education and the school was awarded a second, five-year charter.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: The Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division should implement the ***Life Skills Training Program***. This model program, currently operating in schools across the nation, is a drug use prevention program that provides general life skills training and social resistance skills training to junior high/middle school students (*Appendix F*). The three basic components of the program include (1) Personal Self-Management Skills (e.g., decision-making and problem-solving); (2) Social Skills (e.g., communication and general social skills); and (3) Drug-Related Information and Skills training is designed to impact on knowledge and attitudes concerning drug use (e.g. skills for resisting drug use influences from the media and peers). Programs Division has currently applied for technical assistance for this program.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR: School districts should maximize the use of alternative classrooms and schools for those students who are disruptive or have behavioral problems that interfere with the education process. Specific intervention, curriculum, and programming must be established to address and support their individual needs.

There are some students whose behavior may merit a removal from the mainstream school population but not necessarily a complete expulsion from the school district. For these students, an alternative school setting is appropriate. Many school districts have established an alternative school program to address the needs of these students. It is not simply large urban districts that have begun to address the issue of alternative schools as rural and suburban school districts have developed innovative responses. Finally, in other states, charter schools have been employed a one way to address the need for alternative settings for students who are inappropriate for the mainstream school setting. Although no charter school is currently targeting disruptive students, there are some, such as the Champion Charter School which is a Horace Mann Charter School, which does focus on students who have been unsuccessful in the mainstream school program.

EXAMPLE: Project COFFEE, Oxford School District, Oxford, MA

Project COFFEE (Co-operative Federation for Educational Experiences) is an alternative occupational educational program designed to meet the academic, occupational, social/emotional, and employability needs of at-risk high school students in Central Massachusetts. The program's approach is to balance cognitive achievement, skills acquisition, and occupational education with the provision of services to meet students' needs. Founded in 1979, the program currently enrolls approximately 70 students from 21 school districts. By using small class sizes, hands-on learning, a strong guidance/counseling component and individual instruction, Project COFFEE has been cited as a national model for alternative schools.

EXAMPLE: Bridgewater-Raynham RSD alternative school, Bridgewater, MA

In 1997-98, the leadership in the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District recognized that there were students who were simply inappropriate for the mainstream secondary school program. As a result, the school officials, in association with the Bridgewater Police Department and Brockton Juvenile Court Probation, selected at-risk youth to participate in an alternative high school. The targeted youth were high school age with a history of failure and school disassociation. Along with academic programs such as math, science, English, and social studies, assistance was provided in stress management, self-esteem building, career development, and substance abuse-life skills counseling.

EXAMPLE: Champion Charter School, Brockton, MA

The Champion Charter School is a Horace Mann Charter School located in Brockton. Its mission is to create a learning environment that will support the unique needs of high school aged out-of-school youth by integrating innovative and flexible school-to-career teaching methodologies that stress academic achievement.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE: The Department of Public Health and the Department of Education should assist schools in implementing violence prevention curricula. DPH and DOE have an excellent track record of working together and using the Prevention Center system for consultation to schools. The Department of Public Health in conjunction with the Department of Education shall

- Review available curricula on violence prevention and school-based strategies for violence prevention in schools.
- Develop a kit of tools for schools (e.g. program strategies and curricula materials).
- Disseminate the kit of tools to all school systems.
- Assure materials are available in all state prevention centers.
- Design a plan for technical assistance and consultation to schools on violence prevention.

RECOMMENDATION SIX: Schools, with assistance from the Department of Education, the Department of Public Health, and the Department of Mental Health, should educate parents about the early warning signs of potentially violent youth. This type of education need not be constrained to a classroom setting, and may consist solely of parents educating themselves of their own child's behavior. Parents need to be cognizant of their children's behavior, interests, peers, and whether they are exhibiting anti-social behavior or early warning signs for delinquent or violent behavior. Parental involvement in the lives of their children should be actively encouraged and every attempt must be made to support, inform, and encourage them to participate in this effort. We recommend that parents play an instrumental role in the suggested school safety committees. Other adults from the community can also become involved with community youth by serving as mentors at schools and youth service agencies.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN: The Departments of Education, Public Health and Public Safety establish a series of regional forums to provide technical assistance to school districts, communities, and parents to plan for safer schools.

The Massachusetts State Police P.E.A.T. program and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Multi-Hazard School Training Project should be used to train school personnel, including administrators, teachers, and counselors, on how to respond to violent youth. The Department of Mental Health would be responsible for training personnel to *identify* early warning signs of at-risk youth. In addition, the procedures for appropriately communicating information regarding potentially violent youth must be clearly delineated for school personnel.

Through the P.E.A.T. program, State Police officers train educators in prevention as well as developing an effective response program. This could be supplemented with the Massachusetts Emergency Management's *Multi-Hazard School Safety Plan*, which includes response training not only for school violence incident management, but hazardous accidents, terrorism, or natural disasters. Educating school officials on how to respond is critical because time may lapse before law enforcement is even called to a scene.

STUDENTS

[At a forum on school safety held in the Minnechaug Regional High School of the Hampden Wilbraham Regional School District], Student Council member Cassandra Welch received a rousing ovation when she cautioned adults from overreacting and making school "feel like a prison." *"200 attend forum on safe schools", Springfield Union News, May 19, 1999*

As much as there is a fundamental right to a safe school, there is also an equally fundamental responsibility to assist in the solution for safer schools. Secondary students should be active participants in the development of safe school agenda as well as independent self-directed initiatives. Student leaders in both co-curricular and extra-curricular activities should take on the responsibility for helping provide for an atmosphere of tolerance of all students as well as encouraging communication between students and school officials about issues or threats. Students may establish leadership councils or groups such as Students Against Violence Everywhere (S.A.V.E.) which will work to effect a safer school environment.

PARENTS

“[I]t’s your responsibility, not just to put your child in a school, but to place your child in a school you believe works for them. That is your responsibility. That’s not just good parenting, that’s your job.” *Lisa Graham Keegan, Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction*

Parents are the first educators. From an early age, children understand appropriate conduct as it is defined by their parent’s behavior. Further, parents are the first line in any accountability system. They must ask questions and get involved with the solutions. Some suggestions for parents:

- Parents need to talk to their children about their problems, fears, and concerns. The children need to be taken seriously and given support.
- Parents need to be supervise their children. They need to know where the children are and what they are doing.
- The schools and the community needs the support of parents. Parents should attend forums which seek to solve the issue of violence among young people. Further, parents need to support the schools and community as they implement strategies.
- Parents need to lock up their guns and ammunition. They also need to talk about gun violence with their children.
- Parents need to limit their children’s exposure to media violence as a form of entertainment, particularly computer games which glorify violence. Parents nee to discuss with their children how media violence desensitizes one to violence and portrays violence unrealistically as a glamorous and effective solution to problems.
- Parents need to monitor their children’s activities on the Internet. Software is available which will block access to hate sites, sites which provide information about bombs or other inappropriate sites.
- Parents need to educate their children in moral values and principles, including personal responsibility and tolerance.
- When in doubt about their child’s behavior, parents should be encouraged to consult with school, community or health professionals (see Appendix G for *Questions For Parents To Ask of Their School Officials*).

SMALLER SCHOOLS

While schools may engage in a series of strategies to ensure that there is more contact between a teacher or staff person with a school (e.g. “schools within schools” and smaller classes), the research is clearly persuasive that a smaller school is more effective educationally and safer. At this point, the Department of Education provides little guidance and no incentive to address the research on this matter. However, communities planning for new schools should be aware of the fact that larger secondary schools bring a greater number of behavioral problems and offer fewer opportunities for involvement and leadership than smaller schools. It is a matter that should be reviewed for further action.

PREVENTION

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

Author Unknown

SUMMARY

Schools must be able to identify students who present a risk of serious anti-social behavior and intervene with those students to minimize any risk they may present. To do this, schools will need more information than what is currently available to them. At the present time, many schools are unable to obtain critical information from state agencies and courts regarding students about whom they are concerned. This lack of information inhibits a school's ability to act in a timely or effective manner in either addressing the student's issues or taking steps to protect the safety of others in the school building. Without the ability to work in concert with law enforcement officials, court personnel, social workers, mental health professionals, parents and community organizations, school officials will lack the expertise and resources needed in response to at-risk students. This collaboration is vital to identifying at-risk youth before a proclivity for violence develops. To accomplish this goal, we recommend the following:

COMMUNITY-BASED JUSTICE

In an outside section of the FY 1994 state budget, then-Lt. Governor Cellucci and former Governor Weld authorized district attorneys to develop Community-Based Justice forums (CBJ) across the Commonwealth. CBJ is a network of local task forces that meet regularly in each county to identify and share information about high-risk youth whose behavior poses a threat to their schools, neighborhoods, and communities. However, the panels are currently operating only on a countywide basis and not every area actually utilizes the model. By implementing it at the school level and doing so in more locations, the chances of successful intervention are much greater.

The task forces are comprised of community leaders, school officials, police, prosecutors, probation officers, correction officials, and social service professionals. The mission of CBJ is to work proactively, collectively, and consistently with all school representatives, law enforcement, state social service agencies, human health resources, and community leaders to promote public safety and social responsibility among youth.

RECOMMENDATION ONE: The Community-based justice roundtable model should be enhanced and maximized in school districts across the Commonwealth to address issues presented by at-risk youth. Under this model, the state should:

- Standardize statewide implementation of the Community-based justice model.
- Identify two Community-based justice programs to pilot the development and implementation of training programs. Through this pilot program, schools will be provided with information regarding risk factors and violent behavior.
- The Community-based justice collaborative will be responsible for assessing the risk a student may present, and identifying appropriate services in order to address the behavior.

One major goal of the CBJ panel is to immediately identify young people whose behavior is disruptive to other students or impedes his or her own ability to constructively participate in the educational process. The benefits of enhanced communication and information sharing across agency lines will result in early identification and intervention for kids in crisis or at-risk for violent behavior. Early intervention is the panacea for averting tragedy. In addition, such a collaborative effort would clearly be an improved utilization of existing resources. It will foster a greater sense of trust and cooperation between schools and state agencies and will hopefully serve to identify and eliminate institutional barriers and existing gaps in service.

Confidentiality issues prohibit the CBJ panel from discussing specific information about youths. The passage of Senate Bill 745 currently before the legislature, is essential to maximize the effectiveness of the Community-based Justice model (*Appendix H*). This bill, commonly referred to as the “information sharing bill”, seeks to enhance interagency communication in criminal proceedings regarding juvenile and youthful offenders. If passed, it would greatly assist the community-based juvenile justice programs by specifically authorizing the exchange of information concerning juvenile court records, investigations, court proceedings, as well as care, custody and education, and treatment plans for juveniles, among the various agencies and representatives participating in the program. Additionally, the proposed legislation would mandate that the probation department notify the superintendents and school principals of the arraignment or disposition of any criminal or delinquency proceeding involving a student within their district. School officials need access to court information and social service agencies’ records in order to respond to public safety concerns in their schools.

Improving the Learning Environment

To prevent school violence, it is necessary to initiate and maintain partnerships between the school system, criminal justice, social service agencies, and the community. In essence, the community as a whole must organize and take ownership of violence in their schools. Working together, community stakeholders, schools, youth, parents, media, and law enforcement, can promote a safer place for learning. One way to mobilize the community is to create a school safety committee that would identify impediments to safe schools and strive to accomplish goals that will reduce any existing problems. Members of the safety committee should include parents, teachers, students, administrators, local law enforcement, and school nurses. The Commission recommends the following to help improve the learning environment:

RECOMMENDATION TWO: The Department of Public Health and the Department of Education should develop training curricula to assist schools in establishing school safety committees and developing protocol to prevent and respond to violent incidents including:

- Creating a safe school building
- Increasing surveillance and supervision around the school
- Keeping weapons out of school
- Responding to a violent incident
- Procedures for stopping a fight
- Aiding victim recovery
- Reporting violent incidents to police and DOE

Research has shown that changes in the physical environment can serve to reduce crime in public places. School safety committees can also apply this theory by implementing various physical measures, such as maintaining a clean, neat internal and external appearance and improving lighting on school grounds. Schools can also implement a visitor sign-in policy, thereby deterring unwanted visitors and providing a means for tracking potential troublemakers. Mandating a closed campus policy (e.g., one entrance and exit during school hours, not permitting students to leave school grounds for lunch) is another option for controlling the physical environment of a school. Campus grounds patrol or law enforcement presence can also serve as a deterrent to potential violence.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: The Commonwealth’s schools should conduct annual school safety assessments. National research suggests, that at a minimum, school policies should be evaluated and revised accordingly on an annual basis to best reflect changes in student populations and contributing social factors. Additionally, schools can administer safety surveys to parents, teachers and/or students to determine impediments to safety and identify possible solutions. It could also be the role of the school safety committee to survey the physical environment by identifying where incidents occur and creating physical solutions to prevent future incidents.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR: A zero-tolerance stance to violence, harassment, hate-crimes, firearms, drugs and alcohol should be emphasized and conveyed in all communications to students. A detailed anti-harassment policy should be incorporated into student handbooks (*see Appendix I for a Model Civil rights and Safety Policy*). Student handbooks are required in every school district under M.G.L. Ch. 71 s.37H. To best communicate these policies to students, the handbook should be reviewed both in the school setting and at home, requiring both students and parents to sign a form stating that they have read the document. Training of faculty should be undertaken once the anti-harassment policy is added to the student handbook. The inability to tolerate differences is often the origin of youth violence. Creating an environment that encourages diversity among students is an important component to improving the overall quality of the learning environment.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE: The Executive Office of Public Safety Programs Division should implement the *Bullying Prevention Program*, a model program in violence prevention which aims to reduce victim/bully problems among primary and secondary school children by developing clear rules against this type of behavior (*Appendix J*). Intervention occurs at the school, classroom, and individual level, with active involvement by both teachers and parents. It aims to improve peer relations to make schools a safe and pleasant place. This program has demonstrated an improvement in school climate and a decrease in antisocial behavior, such as theft, vandalism, and truancy.

The most effective way of blocking what the American Psychological Association calls the “trajectory of violence” is to start when children are young. Research shows that bullies are insensitive to their victims, have average or good self-esteem and take a relatively positive view of their violent ways. The start to safer schools begins in the pre-school and elementary grades and providing a “bully-free” school experience.

EXAMPLE: Bullying: Springfield School District

Springfield has developed a program which addresses bullying in the elementary schools in Springfield. Working closely with area experts, Springfield piloted the program in several schools this year and found the experience to be very positive.

Social factors can often play a role in the level of violence experienced in a school. Schools need to foster a friendly, non-threatening environment that is conducive to learning. It is crucial to have schools free from bullying and peer pressure, while at the same time, encouraging respect and understanding among students.

RECOMMENDATION SIX: Law enforcement presence on school grounds should be increased. In Massachusetts, community policing funds can be utilized to support school resource officers. In fact, during Fiscal Year 1998, 260 Massachusetts police officers served as resource officers in schools across the Commonwealth. Police agencies should be encouraged to utilize these funds to build and strengthen relationships with youth. The state-funded D.A.R.E. program also increases police visibility in schools across the Commonwealth. During FY98, 505 officers administered the Core D.A.R.E. curriculum to over 92,000 5th and 6th grade students. Furthermore, during the 1998 grant period, over 36,300 junior high school and 21,200 high school students received D.A.R.E. instruction related to violence prevention and drug-free practices.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN: Implementation of *school uniforms* should be considered in public schools across Massachusetts, as research shows a uniform dress code improves the learning environment and impacts student performance.

There has been a fair amount of discussion about school uniforms as a tool to promote safer school environments. One of the chief benefits of school uniforms, say proponents, is that they make schools safer. Uniforms are said to reduce gang influence, minimize violence by reducing some sources of conflict, and help to identify trespassers. Parents benefit because they are no longer pressured to buy the latest fashions, and they spend less on their children’s clothing. Uniforms are also claimed to help erase cultural and economic differences among students, set a tone for serious study, facilitate school pride, and improve attendance. Further, proponents

also say uniforms enhance students' self-concepts, classroom behavior, and academic performance.

Most preliminary findings come from the Long Beach (California) Unified School District, the first U.S. public school system to require uniforms for elementary and middle school students. Before implementing its policy in September 1994, the school district required approval from two-thirds of the parents.

The Long Beach Superintendent has reported that during the first year suspensions decreased by 32 percent, school crime by 36 percent, fighting by 51 percent, and vandalism by 18 percent. At an elementary school, attendance rates have risen each year since the policy went into effect, reaching a high of 96 percent. More recent information is available from the school district's web site.

EXAMPLE: The James Timilty Middle School, Boston Public School District

For several years, the Timilty Middle School in Boston has employed school uniforms as one of the tools to create and foster a sense of school identity and community. In an article in the Boston Globe, Roger Harris, then principal of the Timilty said, "We see a difference in attitude. People act better when they're dressed up. It limits petty competition, and it changes the perception people have of our students on the streets. They're seen as students, not gang members." Other school officials noted that the uniform policy convey "a sense of pride, a sense of purpose." Timilty Middle School's achievement as a successful urban middle school has earned itself recognition as one the nation's Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education.

EXAMPLE: Lowell Public School District

This spring, the Lowell School Committee voted to require school uniforms for students in elementary grades with uniforms required for middle school students in the fall of 2000.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT: The Department of Education together with the District Attorneys and school superintendents, principals and others should produce a simple guide for school officials about the law on searches and seizures and other school safety issues to give greater guidance to school personnel. Additional security measures should be addressed at the local level, with technical assistance by the Department of Education. The Department of Education should conduct workshops to assist in the training of school administrators on these issues.

As noted earlier in the report, more than 20,000 Massachusetts secondary students report bringing weapons into schools. However, less than 2% of that figure have been detected carrying weapons with the result being suspension or expulsion. There are a variety of strategies which schools have employed to address the issue of concealed weapons. A requirement of clear or mesh book bags, alterations to the physical plant which would limit access to weapons concealed on school grounds and other such policies have been developed to limit the availability to and the concealment of weapons. Larger schools require identification badges on students and staff. Other changes such as better locks on doors would serve to deter others from entering the school and causing harm.

EXAMPLE: Clear book bags, Holyoke Public School District

Beginning in the fall of 1999, secondary students in Holyoke will have to use clear plastic bags to carry the books and other school supplies to school. This change was the result of a new school safety plan developed over the past several months.

Although the issue of metal detectors is one which is a difficult one for many school districts, some have decided that caution is the best policy. In Kansas City, Mo., the district installed metal detectors several years ago and has not had one shooting or knifing in seven years. Here in Massachusetts, the South Hadley school committee recently addressed this issue.

EXAMPLE: Metal detectors, South Hadley Public School District

In response to parents' concerns about safety, the school district purchased two hand-held metal detectors. Like many school districts in Massachusetts, South Hadley had several incidents involving threats last spring. In addition to upgrading the security involved with access to the building, the district purchased the metal detectors as part of their overall strategy to reduce the threat of harm within the district. As reported in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, school committee chairman Henry Lukashik said "None of us find this particularly pleasant . . . I believe that our schools are safe but that doesn't mean that we will let one single threat go unnoticed."

IDENTIFYING CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

RECOMMENDATION NINE: The Department of Mental Health should develop a train-the-trainer program that would instruct key school personnel to identify and respond to children with behavioral issues. Specifically, the program should:

- Identify high-risk children and intervene before they act out.
- Understand psychiatric disturbances and how they are manifested in children (including an overview of psychopharmacology symptoms, side effects).
- Learn of local services available for kids with mental health issues and their families and how to access these services.
- Employ behavior management strategies for disruptive kids.
- Improve education outcomes for special education children.
- Understand trauma and its impact in the classroom.
- Work with parents regarding their child's mental health.

Schools need assistance identifying children who have behavioral issues to ensure that these children and their families have access to appropriate services. To be successful, the state should encourage and foster collaboration between the Department of Mental Health and local schools, perhaps utilizing school nurses as a key point of contact. DMH has indicated that they could begin to work with schools to incorporate the concept in pre-school training. The Commissioner of Mental Health has already begun meeting with school superintendents on this issue.

ANONYMOUS STUDENT HOTLINE

RECOMMENDATION TEN: There should be implementation of a statewide safe schools *hotline*, as peers are often the group most likely to know in advance about potential school violence. The Executive Office of Public Safety has been in contact with the Massachusetts State Police, the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, and Bell Atlantic regarding implementation and operation of the hotline. The State Police have agreed to absorb the costs associated with the hotline. Bell Atlantic has made available 1-888-SAFE-MAS(S) as the statewide phone number. The State Police would not be the responding law enforcement agency, but would act as a conduit, immediately transmitting calls to the dispatcher in the locality of origin.

The purpose of a hotline would be to provide a communication channel for students to report information about suspicious behavior, threats, the existence of weapons on school grounds, or any other information that, if reported, could prevent violent activities on school grounds. A hotline can be effectively executed if anonymity is assured, alleviating a caller's fear of retaliation, embarrassment, and other negative peer pressures. Hotline calls would need to be received, tracked, and responded to by highly trained individuals. In Memphis, Tennessee, a hotline was established for students to call anonymously with information pertaining to any classmate who brings a weapon to school. At the time of the call, students are provided with a secret code number that they can use to confidentially retrieve follow-up information on their initial report.

CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE AND MANAGEMENT

“When the time to respond arrives, the time to prepare has passed.”

Author Unknown

SUMMARY

During the past three years, there have been numerous episodes of violence on school grounds. Several of these incidents have resulted in large numbers of casualties. There has been one consistent finding after each of the recent episodes of school violence, and that is, most of the victims who were evacuated from the scene survived their injuries. The implication is clear - in all of these events, the greatest opportunity to save lives lies in the swift, efficient response and management of the situation.

There exists in Massachusetts the need for a controlled, coordinated response plan, to be followed by all responding agencies. An established school safety campaign would educate the public, students, school personnel, and parents concerning the measures in place to ensure school safety both preventively and in an emergency response situation. Massachusetts can learn from the successes and failures of other communities, and apply those lessons here.

All recommendations for responding to school violence incidents stress preparation. Proper planning is key when responding to and containing an emergency situation. Schools can never be too prepared. Every possible situation must be considered and ideas for effective response must be brainstormed. If a school tragedy does arise, an effective, coordinated emergency response is imperative in order to minimize the injuries. Such a plan requires the knowledge of all parties involved regarding the various safety and response resources available at the time of an incident. The following recommendations should be considered to accomplish these goals:

RECOMMENDATION ONE: The Executive Office of Public Safety should work with State and local police to develop and promulgate a comprehensive set of guidelines for emergency response that provide basic, customizable plans for responding to critical incidents. It should be inclusive, with sections for every responder, including:

- Police/fire/emergency medical services/emergency management
- Chief Medical Examiner
- District Attorneys
- Media
- Counseling
- Families
- School personnel

In addition, an “Emergency Responder’s Toolkit” should be developed and distributed to each locality. This package should contain items essential to law enforcement responders and will be stored at a central location of the local police headquarters. The “toolkit” will include, among other items:

- Polaroid camera/film
- Batteries
- Blueprints of each school in the city/town
- Important phone numbers

RECOMMENDATION TWO: While a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step, such a journey should also begin with a map. For the purposes of school safety, every school district and each school should assemble an array of school and community leaders together with parents, staff and students to assess and address the issues of deterring and diminishing youth violence in the schools and neighborhoods. The School Safety Committee may organize itself into sub-committees in order to facilitate the development of plans. These meetings should result in a Community-wide plan which will address several topics: prevention from both programmatic and management perspectives as well as the response to incidents (*see Appendix K for Questions which might be used to facilitate the early conversations of the School Safety Committee*).

School Safety Committees should include representatives from law enforcement, the student body, school personnel, parents, clergy, community members, emergency services, and the media. The Team focus should be on prevention, preparation, response management, and resolution of emergency situations.

- Law enforcement needs to work closely with school officials in devising emergency communications (e.g., special telephone numbers and radio channels) as well as other disaster responses.
- All emergency plans must be kept on record and periodically reviewed for possible improvements.
- A mutual understanding with the media must be attained so the appropriate and correct information is disseminated in the event of a crisis.

In addition, the School Safety Committees should develop and distribute a written safety plan to be employed by school systems in the event of a crisis (*Appendix L*). The purpose of these safety plans would be to reduce the exposure to mass casualties in the event of an episode of violence on school grounds. Once the plan has been established, the work of the Committee is not over. The Committee should be reconvened periodically in order to re-affirm the plan or adapt the plan to new information or circumstances.

An example of some of these measures include:

- Fire alarm/sprinkler cutoff switches.
- Central power cut-off switches for computer labs, and other brightly-lit rooms.
- Development of “code word” systems, to discreetly alert teachers of incidents and evacuation procedures.

EXAMPLE: Springfield Safe Schools Task Force, Springfield, MA

In October, 1998, a 26 member task force was convened by the school committee which was made up of city officials, private citizens, business leaders, the local media and representatives from social service agencies. They worked for several months holding public hearings to discuss the issues of safe schools in Springfield. The task force was broadened to include non-school officials or personnel in order to bring new perspectives to the issue.

In August of 1999, the group issued a forty-six page report with 31 points for improvement. Among its recommendations, the task force called for:

- Training all school department personnel to recognize early warning signs of potentially violent students;
- Establishing a new database to identify trends in behaviors and schools;
- Establishing a new “incident report” which would be used with the new database;
- Strengthening the link between the schools and community agencies;
- Increasing the frequency of random searches in the schools;
- Improving the physical plant including locks and other security devices; and
- Contracting for an independent “safe school” audit.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: A Memorandum of Understanding should be developed between local police departments and the media. There currently exists such an agreement between the Massachusetts State Police and the media regarding coverage of a hostage incident (*Appendix M*). The goal would be statewide implementation of a similar document. The media would guarantee to conduct themselves with restraint, by not broadcasting any information unless it is provided to the pool reporter. In return, police would provide a media representative with regular updates and information, as well as interviews with officials.

The recent episodes of school violence, as well as local incidents, have highlighted this problem. Specifically, the 1998 Paul Hardy hostage incident in Salem, clearly demonstrates the need for a definitive media/law enforcement agreement. This particular situation involved an off-duty correction officer who was held hostage in his own home, along with his two children. While inside the house, the perpetrator was able to watch the television news coverage of the entire situation, including live footage of law enforcement responders advancing on the outside of the house. Actions of media personnel at the scene of a school emergency have grown increasingly reckless. If left unchecked, there is the potential to endanger the lives of both victims and law enforcement personnel.

THREATS

Not all school incidents rise to the level of a crisis, and they often originate as a threat. Specifically, the issue of threats pose a substantial challenge to schools. Following the incident at Columbine, a ripple of copy-cat threats, often imaginary, passed through school districts in the Commonwealth. Many districts were caught off-guard by a lack of an appropriate protocol to the issues. It is important for school districts to prepare and codify policies to deal with such situations (*see Appendix N for Worcester School District's Threat Protocol*).

Threats should be taken very seriously and be reported to police immediately. Students and school faculty should be advised of the necessity to take every threat seriously and report it to the proper authorities. While the role of school personnel should never shift from that of an educator to law enforcer, faculty should be cognizant of early warning signs redictive of violent behavior, and instructed that any warning signs should be addressed immediately.

PROPOSED SAFE SCHOOLS LEGISLATION

SUMMARY

In addition to statutorily requiring any of the above recommendations, we have reviewed other proposals that would probably require filing legislation. These suggestions include mandatory reporting any crimes committed on school grounds to the Commissioner of the Department of Education; enacting stringent criminal penalties for violent crimes committed against school personnel; and stricter penalties for violent crimes committed on school grounds.

RECOMMENDATION ONE: School officials should be required to report any crimes committed on school property, or at any school-sponsored event, to the Commissioner of the Department of Education, on a biannual basis.

As noted above, there is a lack of incident-based data on student behavior and crimes committed in Massachusetts schools. There are currently only a few mechanisms for obtaining limited information about the school environment in Massachusetts. The Department of Education distributed the *Federal Drug-Free and Safe School Act Survey* to school districts in 1998 and 1999. Although not required by law, failure to report will result in the loss of Safe Schools and Drug-free money from the federal government. Despite the fact that 95% of school districts are eligible for this federal money and many schools do respond, underreporting is a serious problem and the accuracy of this data is questionable. Student Exclusion Reports are also collected as part of school districts end of the year report, as required under M.G.L. Ch. 71 s.371/2h and the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act. But this information is limited to expulsions based on gun possession.

The last source of data the state has collected is from the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which is a purely random sample of students' attitudes and behaviors. Only a very small percentage of the student population is voluntarily surveyed. Thus the information gathered from this study is based on self-reported information and lacks statistical significance.

There is a need to collect and refine baseline data on incidence of youth violence in Massachusetts. Mandatory reporting would start an accumulation of much needed statistics in Massachusetts by tracking and monitoring violent crimes committed on school grounds. However, the reality is that even requiring school districts to report crimes and violent incidents does not ensure that the information provided is accurate. Many schools are extremely reluctant to report any incident that would reflect poorly on their institution. Schools and communities must be encouraged to take ownership of youth development. The need to prevent violence and to have a database of reliable statistics far outweighs the fear of a lowered public perception.

Governor Cellucci has already filed a bill to require schools to report sexual assaults and weapon-related crimes committed on school property; this could be an expansion of that legislation. The data obtained as a result of mandatory reporting would enable community-based and statewide statistical analysis to be conducted, which is critical to identifying the scope of school violence in Massachusetts.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: Enhanced criminal penalties for any violent crimes committed on school property, thereby creating a *Violence-Free School Zone*. Similar to the Drug Free School Zone law, M.G.L. 94C, s.32A, violent offenses will be treated more seriously when perpetrated on school grounds. Parents should be able to send their children to school with the expectation that they are in a safe learning environment. It is important to send the message that there will be zero tolerance for violence.

In addition to the above legislative recommendations, the Council has compiled a lengthy report on youth violence legislation filed between 1996-1998 by the Massachusetts General Court and sample legislation from other states. This report is readily available at the Executive Office of Public Safety.

LONG-TERM GOALS OF THE COUNCIL

Because the Council's work is an ongoing effort, it has highlighted a few long-range objectives. Some of these goals include:

- Establishing a Youth Violence Web page. This site would serve as a resource for educators, parents, and students, providing information on what Massachusetts has to offer in the way of youth violence prevention and response.
- Reconstituting the Council to reflect a better composition of interested parties, including a teacher, high school principal, and a student. We would also like to include more geographically diverse members, as many of the school tragedies have occurred in rural settings. The majority of the Council members represent urban areas.
- Somewhat related to focus groups is the possibility of conducting regional forums, perhaps sometime in the late fall of 1999. Not only would student input be sought, but parents, teachers, and local officials would also be targeted. Ideally, these would be conducted in five geographically diverse areas across the state.

CONCLUSION

The problem of youth violence is multidimensional and requires an integrated approach. Quality education in Massachusetts is the cornerstone for future success in all realms of society. Parents, teachers, students, community and state leaders, must bear some of the responsibility in turning our schools back to a safe, fearless, environment. Although there is no guarantee that somewhere, sometime, the Commonwealth will not have a tragedy similar to Littleton, Colorado, we can certainly take steps to minimize the chances and maximize our response as a state if it does occur.

The role of parents in this process, cannot be overestimated. Indeed, this is a point that was raised by students themselves in the aftermath of the Columbine shootings. Students have said time and time again, in numerous surveys and focus groups, that the people they turn to most for direction is their own parents. Parents, by becoming involved in their children's lives and well being, are uniquely positioned to recognize many of the early warning signs of potentially destructive behavior. Parents play a key role in any violence prevention effort, and every attempt must be made to support, inform, and encourage them to participate in this effort.

This report has presented a range of violence prevention and reduction strategies being implemented in local communities across the State that can serve as models for other communities. Multiple efforts are underway across the state to address youth violence, but they are uncoordinated. Because many city and statewide initiatives have developed out of diverse sectors of the community and are often synthesized from isolated projects, gaps exist that need to be identified. The next steps in any school violence reduction strategy should be to facilitate interagency coordination at the State and community levels and evaluate the need for technical assistance and funding support. Initiatives need to focus on developing partnerships and a coordinated approach.

There is no single answer for combating violence in schools. Preventative and intervention strategies should be accomplished by a broad coalition of concerned individuals and community partnerships. Cooperation among parents, law enforcement, public health, families, educators, legislators, criminologists, community-based organizations, and community members is needed to make schools safer places for learning. These recommendations are but one step in a continuing effort to ensure the safety of every child, educator, and staff person in our schools.



APPENDICES

- A. Executive Order creating Governor's Advisory Council on Youth Violence.
- B. *School Violence Prevention Program Proposal*, Executive Office of Public Safety, Programs Division.
- C. Massachusetts School Related Deaths, 1993-present.
- D. Drug Strategies, *Effective Violence Prevention Programs*.
- E. *High Standards for Students in Both Academic and Behaviors*.
- F. *Life Skills Training*, Blueprint Fact Sheet, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.
- G. Questions for Parents to Ask of Their School Officials.
- H. Senate Bill 749, *An Act To Enhance Inter-Agency Communication in Criminal Proceedings Regarding Juvenile and Youthful Offenders*.
- I. *Model Civil Rights and Safety Policy*, Governor's Task Force on Hate Crimes.
- J. *Bullying Prevention Program*, Blueprint Fact Sheet, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.
- K. Questions To Facilitate School Safety Committee Discussions.
- L. School Emergencies Community Pre-Planning Guide.
- M. Memorandum of Understanding, Massachusetts State Police and Boston area television stations.
- N. Worcester School District's Threat Protocol.